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S E R M O N, ¹⁹

PREACHED

1026. f. 10.
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In the Cathedral Church of SARUM,

BEFORE THE

G O V E R N O R S

OF THE

GENERAL INFIRMARY,

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY MEETING,

On FRIDAY, September 29, 1769.

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND
CHARLES, ^{MOSS} LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE EARL OF RADNOR,

PRESIDENT of the SALISBURY INFIRMARY.

MY LORD,

THE following discourse I give up to your Lordship's importunity. The publication of it is no act of mine; and your Lordship must be answerable for every thing in it, that is unworthy of the public eye, or of the cause for which it was prepared. But as your Lordship has driven me to the press, contrary to express stipulation, you must not take it amiss, if I carry you with me; and take this opportunity of publishing to the world, to whom they are indebted for the establishment of this excellent charity. Your Lordship was called up

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by your rank and situation, to be the first mover in it; and you performed your part with a spirit and liberality, that became your character and fortune. The humanity of the country came up to your wishes, and met you half-way; and you have the satisfaction to see it flourish in your hands, and already approach to maturity. And I shall venture to foretel, that it will remain an honourable and lasting monument to future ages of your charity, munificence, and public spirit. Worthy deeds give a lustre to nobility; and your family honours will receive new splendor from the additional title of *Founder of the Salisbury Infirmary.*

I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Very respectful humble Servant,

C. St. DAVID's.

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S E R M O N, &c.

I THESSALONIANS, iv. 9.

AS TOUCHING BROTHERLY LOVE, YE NEED
NOT THAT I WRITE UNTO YOU; FOR YE
YOURSELVES ARE TAUGHT OF GOD TO
LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

✻✻✻✻ T is of little consequence to enquire,
✻ I ✻ in what manner men are taught of
✻✻✻✻ God to love one another. For whe-
ther it be by precept in his holy word,
by an instinct planted in the constitution of man,
or by the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the
heart of man; the duty itself is the same, and
derived from the same original source.

We shall not perhaps go beyond the truth, if
we say that men are taught the lesson of love by
each of these ways, and by some others that
might be added. But our purpose, at present, is
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not so much to investigate the origin of this principle, and to point out the particular manner in which it is introduced into the heart, as to shew that it is there, and is the natural growth of it. And certain it is, that the natural bent and turn of the human heart are to acts of benignity. For though in some cases, where other principles and passions are mixed and blended with it, its regular operations may be obstructed; yet simple nature, when left to itself, unbiaſſed by interest, habit, or passion, will always appear to be tender and friendly, invariably disposed to relieve the distressed, to protect the innocent, and in general to do good, rather than evil. In short, he that attends to the workings of his own heart, or observes from effects what passes in the hearts of others, will see plainly that we are taught of God, or nature, which is the work of God, to love one another.

Love or benevolence takes a different name according to the different objects to which it refers, or the different manner in which it operates. And my design is, not to confine myself to its general character and properties, but to consider such modes and kinds of it as are most obvious and familiar to us; such as are the result of different habits, tempers and constitutions, and serve to form the characters of men.

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The first sentiments of love, that shew themselves in the human heart, appear to have an interested source, and to arise from a sense of utility. The infant, as soon as he is capable of expressing a like or dislike, shews a fondness for those, who have the immediate care of his person, whose office it is to feed, cloath and amuse him. As he advances in years, and his mind comes to be stocked with moral and social ideas, his particular affection for others is excited from other principles; from the relation he bears to them, or the virtues he discovers in them. Some of the most distinguished species of benevolent affections, are filial and parental love, and the love between the sexes. But the text rather leads us to the consideration of such affections as are not within the domestic pale. And,

1st, The first and simplest manner in which love operates, in the commerce of mankind one with another, is in the way of friendship; which supposes a close and cordial attachment of the parties one to another, by a mutual warmth of affection, far superior to that of general benevolence. 'Tis true, indeed, we did not bring this affection into the world with us, nor, strictly speaking, any other; but we brought with us a great aptness to acquire it. It is in its nature a limited and partial affection; but it
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is a kind of partiality that is innocent in itself, and which human nature is apt to fall into. It is a conjunction of hearts and affections that constitutes the general character of friendship; and where such a conjunction truly subsists, it is one of the richest sources of human happiness. For what true and solid happiness must needs arise from a perfect union of hearts and minds, a mutual intercourse of good offices, a community of counsels, a joint participation of every enjoyment, both intellectual and temporal?

Writers, both antient and modern, who have examined this subject philosophically, suppose wisdom and virtue to be a necessary foundation of friendship. And it seems to be true indeed, that the wise and virtuous only, are capable of attaining the most perfect state of it. But it is true also, that a moderate degree of sense and prudence, joined to a virtuous mind, are ample qualifications to sustain well the character of a friend, and to enjoy the pleasures of friendship.

There may be a combination amongst wicked and profligate men, formed and supported by a common interest, or the joint gratification of some corrupt passion. But such combination is far removed from any just idea of friendship. There is a distrust that goes with a bad heart, which is inconsistent with the character of friendship,

friendship, and destructive of it. Where a mutual confidence is wanting, and suspicion liable to arise, a confederacy may subsist for a while, but friendship can have no place. But where this affection results from a sensible heart and a virtuous mind, with prudence and discretion to guide and govern it, there it appears in its most amiable form, and yields the highest enjoyment. But,

2dly, The affection of love has not only individuals for its object, but embraces at once multitudes combined together. And of this species of love the most illustrious instance is patriotism, or the love of our country. This, indeed, when compared with universal benevolence, is but a partial affection; but, the general sense of mankind shews it to be an honourable one. It implies a generous and disinterested regard for the body politic, of which we are constituent members, with an active zeal on all proper occasions to support its interests, to maintain its rights and liberties, and to promote its glory.

Each virtue is apt to strike us in proportion to the size of its object; and hence it is, that patriotism holds a higher rank in the estimation of mankind, than common benevolence. For though the latter in the general idea of it is more extensive, comprehending the whole hu-

man race ; yet, when reduced to practice, it operates in favour of individuals only ; whereas every exertion of the other intends the benefit of a whole community.

The love of country is certainly a virtue that deserves to be cultivated in every political state ; and, under a proper direction, merits all the praise with which orators and poets have agreed to adorn it. We read and admire many illustrious examples of it in the Grecian and Roman story ; and instances are not wanting in our own. How much, or how little, it may flourish in the present age, they can best judge who are conversant in the great world. But, without pretending to an accurate knowledge of the world, one may safely pronounce, that it is not the virtue that marks the character of the times. To judge from appearances, indeed, one would be apt to conclude, that the case is far otherwise. For how can the love of country subsist and flourish, where a general dissipation prevails ? where the minds of men are engaged and divided between the love of pleasure and the love of gain, the lust of power, place and distinction ? Mock patriotism, indeed, was never more prevalent amongst us than it is at present. But this is a disgrace to the age, and not to the praise of it. Counterfeits and impostors are odious characters ; and
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the more precious the object of deception, the more infamous and detestable the authors of it.

3dly, There is another species of love, which is more general in its nature, though more limited in its operation, and that is, what in common speech is called good-nature. Nature, we say, infused into the breast of every man, a certain portion of benevolence. And whenever it exceeds, in a sensible degree, the ordinary measure, it constitutes the good-natured character. It is the property of good-nature to be always ready to do good offices to others, and to be most happy when it finds opportunities of doing them. Its sensations are quick and delicate; it is soon touched with a scene or a tale of distress, and is always prompt to relieve it. But if it feels for the sufferings of others, it is proportionably affected with their enjoyments. So far from envying the success of another, a passion which human nature is unhappily prone to, that it finds a real and cordial pleasure in it; and its own happiness receives a sensible increase from every accession of it to its neighbour. Such is the rank it holds, in the esteem of men, that it serves to atone for many defects that meet in the same character; and he that has it in a competent degree, in spite of faults, that might otherwise disgrace him, is yet beloved and respected.

It is a great argument of its worth, in the opinion of mankind, that such pains are taken, by those of better rank especially, to mimick it. For what is good-breeding, but an artificial kind of good-nature, to supply its place in a character where it is not, and to set it off to advantage where it is? The language of good-breeding is that of humility and love. What pity it is, that it is not always the language of the heart! It shews however the sense of mankind as to what the heart ought to be; for the use of language is only to declare the sentiments of the heart.

It were much to be wished, that all men could be brought to love one another, as the apostle speaks, not in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth. But in the present state of man, where other principles of a different kind abound and prevail, it is hardly to be expected. And in this view of human nature, some degree of dissimulation may be tolerable, and even useful, to hide the malignity of those principles, and to prevent the mischievous effects they would naturally have on society. If the envy and malice, the scorn and contempt of others, the selfish and vindictive passions, as they lie rankling in the heart, were always laid open to the eye or the ear, mankind would be hateful to one another beyond endurance. It seems better

better therefore, that men should amuse one another with words of pleasing sound, though without meaning, in order to keep up an appearance of good-humour, than to utter at all times such sentiments, as would make them odious and disgusting to each other.

But though this artificial love, which goes no farther than to form an appearance, may have its use in the present depraved state of man, yet true and undissembled love is far more desirable. Were men but to study sincerely, and practise the religion they profess, such colourings of language would be rendered needless. For in this case, the expressions of the lips would always correspond with the sentiments of the heart, and the leading property of good-breeding would be genuine good-nature without artifice or disguise.

4thly, Another species, or rather degree of love, as it constitutes a character, is generosity or liberality ; which indeed differs no otherwise from good-nature, than a rapid current differs from a gentle stream ; for it seems to be nothing more than good-nature, warmly and liberally exerted. Generosity is the attribute of a noble and liberal mind. It rolls in a higher sphere, operates with superior force and energy, and disdains any thing that is little, even though it be in itself laudable. It seeks to be distinguished, and to have its
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light shine before men, that they may see its good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven. Its general purpose is that of imparting happiness to others; but whether it be effected by gratifying their just desires, by removing their sufferings, or adding to their enjoyments, it is always done with an open, a liberal, and unsparing hand.

But human nature produces nothing that is perfect, and something will always adhere to a great character that serves to disparage it. And thus it happens to the generous man. He is warm by constitution, and hasty to judge, resolve and execute; and by this means is oftentimes led to exercise his bounty in favour of objects, that are unworthy of it. But where a generous heart meets with a cool and temperate head, where it has means to support and wisdom to conduct and direct it, it forms the most amiable and respectable character, and will always be distinguished by the purest breath of popular applause, and the general esteem of mankind.

5thly, Whilst we are characterizing the several species or modes of brotherly love, there is one which must not be forgotten, because it is the summit and perfection of all, and that is, Christian love or charity. By this, every species

cies of benevolence ought to be measured, as by its proper standard. And to this all of them must be ultimately reduced. Now Christian love or charity, implies a general good-will to all mankind, as constituting one family under Christ their head; or, a firm and cordial disposition to act with equity, candour, and humanity, in regard to their persons, characters, or property, or any thing whatsoever, in which they can have any interest or concern.

The object of this virtue, you see, is no less than the whole race of man. It admits of no limitations or exceptions, but comprehends even its enemies. But still it is not a blind affection, that operates without discretion; but regulates and adapts its motions to the circumstances and exigency of the case. Though for every instance of distress it bears a pitying eye and a helping hand, yet suffering virtue is its most favoured object, and is always treated with peculiar distinction. When it addresses itself to its enemies, it is to offer them forgiveness, to make a tender of its good-will in return for injuries, and to overcome evil with good. But when its views are directed to the care of its friends, it is with a superior strain of benignity; to render them every benevolent and tender office, which their case may require, and to

blefs them with the overflowings of a chearful, a liberal, and beneficent heart.

And as its general aim and purpose is to do good of every kind, it will decline no lawful means to effect it. It will lean on the bed of sickness, to give comfort to the afflicted; it will fly to the prison, to relieve the captive; it will eat with the publican, to reform and convert him; and wash the feet of its humble attendants, to teach them lessons of humanity and humility.

Christian charity contains under it every other species of love, which are so far only to be accounted virtuous and genuine affections, as they are fairly reducible to it. For example; Christian love is good-nature in its perfect state, without its weaknesses and partialities, secured by its wisdom and discernment from the frauds and impositions, to which the other is oftentimes exposed. Christian love is also the perfection of friendship; for it considers the church of Christ as one great family, closely united by the bonds of friendship. If it enters, as it is most natural to do, into more intimate connections with some than with others, it is always on liberal and virtuous motives; without breaking in upon the general duties of benevolence which are due to all mankind. In Christian love also is comprehended the love of our country, so far as that

that is a virtuous passion; for it stands distinguished, as a pattern of duty and loyalty to the prince, and reverence to the laws. It is the warmest well-wisher to the public weal, and embraces every honourable means to advance it. It seeks its country's strength and security, and is not insensible to its glory. But then it pursues its end, not by violence and oppression, not by the arts of a lawless ambition; but by such means as are dictated by equity, prudence, and humanity. Though its first cares are devoted to its own fellow citizens, yet it is not with an indifference to the rest of mankind. It considers the world itself as one vast community, and that a partial attachment to one little spot might betray us into the violation of those duties, that are incumbent upon us as citizens of the world.

But it is time to apply what has been said to the particular institution, which is the occasion of our present meeting. And this is indeed an institution of love; in which every mode and denomination of love, which have been considered and illustrated in the foregoing discourse, are strongly and fully exemplified.

1st. In this institution you may see the essence and genuine character of good-nature. For how can good-nature be more aptly exercised and displayed, than in relieving the pains and healing

the maladies that are incident to the constitution of man? and especially in that class of men, who are incapable of providing any or adequate relief for themselves? When the blessings imparted by this exertion of your good-nature happen to fall immediately on the head of a poor family, the benefit goes much farther than to his own person. By restoring the limbs, or giving perfect health to the chief and father of it, you restore the means of subsistence, and every domestic comfort to the rest. And you have the satisfaction of knowing that your good-nature is not abused, as it happens in many cases, and thrown away on objects that are unworthy of it. For no person is admitted to a participation of this charity, who does not appear, after a careful examination, to be duly qualified according to the established rules of the society.

2dly. Here also you see displayed, and you may find ample room to exercise, another species of love; I mean liberality; which, as has been observed before, is nothing more than good-nature in the superlative degree. So that the self-same reasons, which so strongly recommend it to your good-nature, render it a fit object of your liberality. Indeed, the call upon your bounty is more urgent at present, than it is likely to be in time to come, whilst the institution itself

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is new; and the building, intended for the reception of the poor objects of it, still in an imperfect and unfinished state. The minds of men are prone to imitation; and I doubt not but those who have as yet been cold to this work of love, will be stimulated and warmed by the examples of those, who have distinguished themselves by their liberality in so worthy a cause. And it is but justice to observe, that some amongst you have promoted it with a zeal and munificence, that does honour to their humanity, and shews that rank and fortune are then truly respectable, when they fall to the share of those who know how to use and adorn them.

3dly. This institution will furnish you also with another species or denomination of love, and that is, the love of your country. For the end and purpose of it, carried to their full extent, terminate in the most solid and substantial good to our country. Restoring health or limbs to the industrious and useful members of society, is increasing the number of effective hands in it, and adding strength and wealth to the community. The profits of the labourer, whether in agriculture or manufactures, reckoned by the rules of political arithmetic, are just so much gain to the public. So that, in restoring to him the ability to follow his calling, besides the personal re-

lief to himself, you are rendering an essential service to your country. The industrious labourers, in the several arts and occupations of life, are, truly speaking, the most useful and profitable members of the public body. The great and the opulent (I speak it with deference and under correction) are but drones at the common hive, *fruges consumere nati*; living and fattening on the labour of others, without contributing to the common stock. It is in the number of useful and laborious hands, that the national wealth and strength consist. It is from hence that your armies are recruited, your navies supplied, arts and manufactures supported, and the wealth of both the Indies brought to the British shores. If therefore you have any love for your country, here you may indulge it to the best advantage. You exert it on an object which cannot deceive you, where the public utility is apparent to every eye.

He that seeks to display his patriotism by serving the interests of a party, is more likely to become the dupe of knaves, than a true friend to the public. Amongst the many parties with which this nation has, at various times, been distracted, very few have been founded in principles of public spirit. The public good, indeed, is, and must be, the pretence (for political parties

ties have no other support), though private interest, or something worse, is the true spring that gives motion and activity to the whole. This has been too often the spirit of national parties in time past. A portion of the same spirit, I am afraid, has been transmitted to the present. The patriotism of party, as it regards the leaders of it, is, generally speaking, a piece of public mockery. Its merits are at the best equivocal. Where the principle that lies at the bottom is a bad one, it is in every view flagitious and detestable. Let us then leave it to the vain and the ambitious, to the noisy demagogue, to the disappointed and disgraced; and spend our zeal on an institution that is strictly patriotic, both in its principle and effects; where, whilst we are imparting the blessing of health and domestic comfort to some wretched individuals, we are rendering an essential service to the public.

4thly, and lastly. This great work of benevolence comprehends in it the perfection and completion of love, which is Christian charity. Relieving the wretched, and giving health to the sick, are, in common estimation, the great and leading branches of charity; for though charity comprehends in it every mode of doing good for Christ's sake, yet such acts of brotherly love are so denominated in common speech by way of

eminence. In performing or promoting such acts, you follow the great steps of your great Master and Saviour, whose time was chiefly spent in the performance of them. Hear his own account of his own ministry, in answer to the message of John Baptist: *The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them.* This charitable institution extends to every act of grace and mercy, by which our Lord's ministry is here characterized. For the souls of the poor objects are carefully attended to, as well as their bodies; a voluntary attendance being given by the worthy Clergymen in the neighbourhood, to pray with and instruct them, at a time when their passions are calmed, and their spirits subdued by sickness, and their minds more apt to receive impressions from lessons of piety and virtue. And though to raise the dead is beyond the extent of human art or power, yet such may be said in a qualified sense to be raised from the dead, who are preserved from the effect of mortal diseases by the power of medicine. And can your zeal or your fortunes be more laudably employed, than in supporting a cause, which is so exact a counterpart of the Son of God's ministry upon earth?

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To conclude all in one word. In the good work now before us, you have the genuine characters of brotherly love under every mode and denomination of it. You exercise your goodness upon objects that are, of all others, the best entitled to it. You display your liberality in a cause that is truly worthy of it. You demonstrate your love for your country, by your care of those who are the most useful and valuable members of it. And you give full proof of your charity by the self-same acts that distinguished our Lord's ministry to mankind. Go on then, impelled as you are by every worthy motive, religious, moral, and political ; and doubt not but this work of the Lord will prosper in your hands.

T H E E N D.

MUSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

